

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6927

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, US, MILI
SUBJ: YEDIOT STORY ON "SIDEWINDER" MISSILE

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. WE WOULD LIKE TO DRAW THE DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO THE
FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY BEN YISHAI WHICH APPEARED IN RECENT
YEDIOT AHARONOT.

BEGIN TEXT:

2. U.S. THINKING OF SUPPLYING ISRAEL WITH A MODERN MISSILE.
THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS GIVING FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO THE
IDEA OF SUPPLYING ADVANCED AIR-AIR MISSILES TO ISRAEL. THIS
REFERS TO A NEW TYPE OF MISSILE AND THE AMERICANS HAVE HITHERTO
CATEGORICALLY REJECTED ISRAEL'S REQUESTS FOR SAME.

3. THE MISSILE, KNOWN AS THE M-9-L, IS A NEW MODEL OF THE
"SIDEWINDER", WHICH IN ITSELF WAS CONSIDERED A TECHNOLOGICAL
BREAKTHROUGH AS IT PERMITS THE INTERCEPTION OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT
FROM A DISTANCE OF 15 KM, AND FROM AN ANGLE OF ATTACK WHICH HAD
HITHERTO PROVED IMPOSSIBLE FOR SUCH AN OPERATION.

4. THE U.S. IS NOT EVEN SUPPLYING THIS MISSILE TO HER EUROPEAN
ALLIES IN NATO, FOR FEAR THAT IT SHOULD FALL INTO THE HANDS OF
THE SOVIET BLOC. THIS WAS ALSO THE PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATION
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WHICH PREVENTED ITS BEING SUPPLIED TO ISRAEL.

5. U.S. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS DO NOT LINK U.S. READINESS
TO DISCUSS THE SUPPLY OF THIS MISSILE WITH ISRAEL TO THE
TRILATERAL PLANE DEAL WHICH ASSURES SAUDI ARABIA OF ADVANCED
AIRCRAFT AND EGYPT OF SUPERIOR PLANES. THE ADMINISTRATION'S
OFFICIAL POSTURE IS THAT THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE M.E. HAS

NOT BEEN AFFECTED AS A RESULT OF HAVING RECEIVED SENATE APPROVAL OF THE PACKAGE DEAL, AND ISRAEL THEREFORE SHOULD NOT BE AWARDED ANY KIND OF COMPENSATION. HOWEVER, THIS U.S. READINESS TO DISCUSS SUPPLY OF THE NEW MISSILE COULD BE REGARDED AS A GESTURE OF GOODWILL AND PARTIAL, IF UNDECLARED-COMPLIANCE WITH THE LETTER SENT TO PRESIDENT CARTER BY MR. BEGIN, FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF THE PLANE DEAL.

6. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IF ISRAEL DOES RECEIVE THE NEW "SIDEWINDER" MISSILE THIS WILL CONSTITUTE A SIGNIFICANT ADDITION TO HER DETERRENT AIR POWER. THE EASTERN BLOC HAS NO MISSILE CAPABLE OF MATCHING THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS NEW TYPE OF "SIDEWINDER".

7. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: OUR LATEST UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE AIM 9-L IS NOT ON THE LIST OF U.S. WEAPONS WHICH CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO ISRAEL. IS THIS CORRECT? WOULD APPRECIATE CURRENT STATUS OF WASHINGTON IN-HOUSE DISCUSSIONS ON THIS MATTER AS WELL AS READOUT OF ANY RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH ISRAELIS ON SUBJECT OF AIM 9-L.
LEWIS

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